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CANADA:

A BALLAD IN THREE PARTS.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF DUFFERIN,

K. P., G. C. B., etc., etc.

BY

JAMES WHITMAN, B. A.,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW,

OF NOVA SCOTIA.

Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.—VIRGIL.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA:

R. G. SMITH, PRINTER, 125 HOLLIS STREET.

1885.

PRICE 10 CENTS. ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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CANADA.

Versifiers in modern as in ancient times, have sought their patrons, which may excuse the author for so prominently presenting the name of a Peer whose truly noble qualities, high literary instincts and well-won fame as a diplomatic statesman shine so superior to any accidental aid of rank, that, in the language of one of his *now* fellow Peers, it may truly be said :

> "How e'er it be, it seems to me
> 'Tis only noble to be good;
> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood."
>
> —TENNYSON.

"CANADA," A BALLAD.

BY JAMES WHITMAN.

PART I.

While erst un-nam'd, St. Lawrence roll'd his waters to the sea,

The red man roam'd upon their banks in like stern majesty;

His wigwam, in the dewy eve, sent up its curling smoke,

And in the light of happy morn his peaceful slumber broke.

Bathing his brown limbs in the sun, whose rising spirit drew

His upward prayer along its rays to heaven's cerulean blue—

"Great Spirit hear," he said, "my wish to send us plenty food

For small papooses all and squaw, while me go hunt the wood." *

Then throwing what remain'd of robe upon his birch canoe,

He, plunging in the sparkling wave, its crystals backward threw.

But suddenly a tremor seiz'd those limbs that ne'er had quail'd,

---

*Indian diom.

And clammy sweat, with icy chill, that iron frame assail'd;

"Great Spirit, what is that?" he cried, "far yonder on the sea,

Like mighty bird with stretching wings and flying fast to me?"

Back! back to shore, his brawny arms struck their imploring course,

And beck'ning to his busy squaw—with stammering tongue and hoarse—

By gestures and outstretching arm he made her, frightened, see

The cause of his white-lipp'd alarm—the winged mystery.

*Most day they watch'd the growing sail come flapping o'er the deep,
And, crouched in voiceless wonder, saw the image on them creep,
Till evening brought it to the vale where reared their lowly cot,
When ligthtning flashing from its side, like swift harpoon, was shot,
While folding up its mighty wings. Then loud tremendous roar
Re-echoed thunder from each cleft along the river's shore.
From out their hiding place came forth the forest children dumb,
In terror "whispering with white lips"—"Bel.old! Great Spirit come!"

*Indian idiom.

And, trembling on the pebbled beach, awaited still, to hear

What the Great Spirit more would say—now, unto them, so near;

When lo! a small white vision, from the larger one, they saw

Fly forth with foaming crest along, and bound upon the shore,

Like Hiawatha's pale canoe from heaven in days of yore.

* * * * *

Approaching—men of warrior mien make signs for them to come

And take the proffer'd offerings into their pointed* home;

---

*Alluding to shape of Indian wigwam.

But, fearful of the strangers' gaze, and "gifts brought from afar,"

The Indian, turning to his camp, cries "NADA! CA-NA-DA!"*

* * * * *

Fear quell'd at last, and friendship crown'd with quaffing of the cup,

From calumet, in fumes of peace, their vows to heaven went up,

When suddenly a pale-faced man sang forth in lofty song—

Rememb'ring this was that Saint's day—"*Saint Laurent! Saint Laurent!*"

*Said to be indian for "Nothing! nothing here!'

And ever to his dying hour, when other red-men throng,

The Indian, pointing to the stream, cries—"*Laurent! Saint Laurent!*

And all the white men on the earth, this new discovered star

Among the nations of the world, proclaim fair CANADA!

PART II

The flowing tide of years roll'd on, unnumber'd, to the sea

Whose tideless wave engulfs all time in blank ETERNITY;

And faces pale, like autum leaves, grow thick upon the strand

Once peopled only by the race of the red Indian band;

While vessels, from the mighty deep, in fleets the river fleck,

And waken, with saluting roar, the fortress of QUEBEC!

Proud soldiers, gay, with martial tread fair maidens lead in dance;

And countless lilies white display the *Fleur-de-lis* of France—

"The chosen home of Chivalry! the garden of Romance!"

Great statesmen, foster'd near THE THRONE, long ruled the Indian sward,

Where martyr'd soldiers of The Cross had preach'd their risen Lord;

Foul war may blacken other climes, and harrow other soils,

But broad *St. Laurent* rolls between New-France and such turmoils:

While, perch'd upon her eyrie, like an eagle from the sky,

Quebec frowns down upon the foe, with proud, defiant eye!

* * * * *

Wolfe caught the glance; then flashed it back upon entrench'd Montcalm—

These scal'd (the diamond ridges o'er re-echoing wars alarm),

Both heroes, dashing 'mid the fray, each thought the field was won;

Each sank in death at close of day, calm as its setting sun,

Fame's brightest rolls—their names entwined—MONTCALM and WOLF—display;

Years only light fresh aureoles around their mould'ring clay!

Though the triumph of OLD ENGLAND'S arm thus shook out to the sky

The red cross of ST. GEORGE to float where THE LILY used to fly;

For aye may French and English sons, sworn friends unto the death,

Their native land, united, hail with every living breath!

And ever make, against the foe, one holy, common cause

To guard the sacred treasure of their FREEDOM and their LAWS!

And if the tyrant of the NORTH, or REBEL RED conspires

To raise their blood-stained hands against the birth-land of our sires,

May every son of CANADA, should his lov'd country call,

Rush fighting fierce for MOTHER LAND and, need be, for HER fall!

Although with pallid brow in death, his lips cheer for the QUEEN,

And BRITAIN'S ENPIRE—like of which THE WORLD has never seen!

Around—attending angels wait his last expiring sigh;

Then bear, heaven-aureole-crowned, his patriot soul on high!

PART III.

"Peace hath her victories as war," and peace hath
conquered now,
The fertile plains of CANADA, by the triumphs of
the plough:
Once houseless mates, with foodless babes, upon
her virgin soil,
Have found a shelter and a home, where bread
rewards their toil:
And Commerce, on exploring track, extending
yearly, brings
Vast throngs of husbandmen to fill the wombing
of the Springs.

To pilgrims in the wilderness, each hearthstone
lighted new,
Unfolds the paradise of home with paradise of
view.
And corn, and grain, and forest trees, the harvest-
bearing river,
While summer smiles, floats onward, onward,
ever—
To help to shelter and to feed the toiling ones at
home—
The pledge of food, and honest work, if hither-
ward they come!
No caste of gilded pedigree abashes manly brow;
But honest sweat—than coronet—behind the
furrowing plough,

Wreathes purer jewels round the brain whose labour doth instil

The bosom of our MOTHER LAND with fructifying skill.

No musty parchments foul with age, or fouler far with crimes,

Doom children of our soil to dwell in sickly, crowded climes—

While EARTH'S broad acres laughing lie, beneath the golden sun,

Wooing the loving touch of toil, their fruitful breasts upon;

And rank, worth wearing, is as free to all, as is the wind—

The rank which bears the stamp of God—THE PEERAGE OF THE MIND!

The acorn to the oak hath grown, and now strikes out its root

In broad and deep'ning strength of hold—
BRITANNIA'S proud offshoot!

And long may BRITAIN'S oaken germs, transplanted o'er the sea,

Preserve in CANADA the life of BRITISH LIBERTY!

While foremost 'mid the roll of names, which help'd to usher in

The NEW DOMINION'S dawning days stands that of DUFFERIN!

Eidolon not, soon vanishing, like borealian fire;

Nor sudden meteoric light; nor flame from pagan pyre;

But cut in crystal'd thoughts that tune the chords of memory's lyre!

* * * * *

The GROWING NATION, may it prove—DOMINION OF THE GOOD!

And ever stand, in coming years, where BRITAIN always stood—

The foremost in the cause of right! upholder of the truth!

The nation which, in growth of years, grows in the strength of youth!

Then we may cry, with hopeful voice, unto the heavenly powers,

For blessings on our Native Land—"THIS CANADA OF OURS!"